Sale of sugar without official release order

*487. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any complaint against some sugar mills selling sugar without the official order for releasing free sale quota of sugar;

(b) if so, the details of those mills;

(c) whether Government propose to allow future trading in and decontrol of sugar; and

(d) if so, by when a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) and (b) Based on the information received from various quarters regarding sale of sugar in the open market in excess of the quantity released and as part of its enforcement mechanism, the Government have been deputing officers to verify the position regarding sugar stocks and sale and despatch of sugar by the sugar factories. During April, 2000 to 15th April, 2001, 86 sugar factories have been visited. Of this, 12 factories have been found prime-facie violating release orders and they have been issued Show Cause Notices.

(c) and (d) The proposal to allow futures/forward trading in sugar is under consideration of the Government.

Purchase of Wheat by FCI in Punjab

*488. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:
SARDAR GURCHARAN SINGH TOHRA:
Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat likely to be purchased by the Food Corporation of India from the various grain markets of Punjab in the near future;

(b) the criteria adopted by Government in this regard;

(c) whether the State Government has brought to the notice of the Central Government about the involvement of some officers of FCI, who indulged in unethical practices and got the milling done from the defaulter rice mill owners; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) A quantity of 38.61 lakh tonnes of wheat is estimated to be procured in Punjab by the Food Corporation of India during the current Rabi Marketing Season 2001-2002.

(b) A quantity of 78.39 lakh tonnes is estimated to be procured by the State Agencies in Punjab. The Food Corporation of India/State Agencies will procure wheat at Minimum Support Price of Rs. 610/-per quintal in accordance with the specification fixed by the Government of India.

(c) and (d) Government of Punjab brought to the notice of this Ministry that FCI is getting its paddy milled from the mills declared defaulter by the State Government. The FCI has stopped milling of the paddy from such mills as per the instructions of the State Government.

Extension of Maize Procurement Operation

489. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recived any communication in the recent past from the Karnataka Government seeking extension of maize procurement operation under minimum support scheme upto 30-4-2001 in view of the fact that large quantity of maize still continue to pour in the markets;

(b) whether it is a fact that the State Government has extended all support to the FCI to acquire storage space and provide transport facilities for transportation of maize from one point to another to avoid any strain; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND